

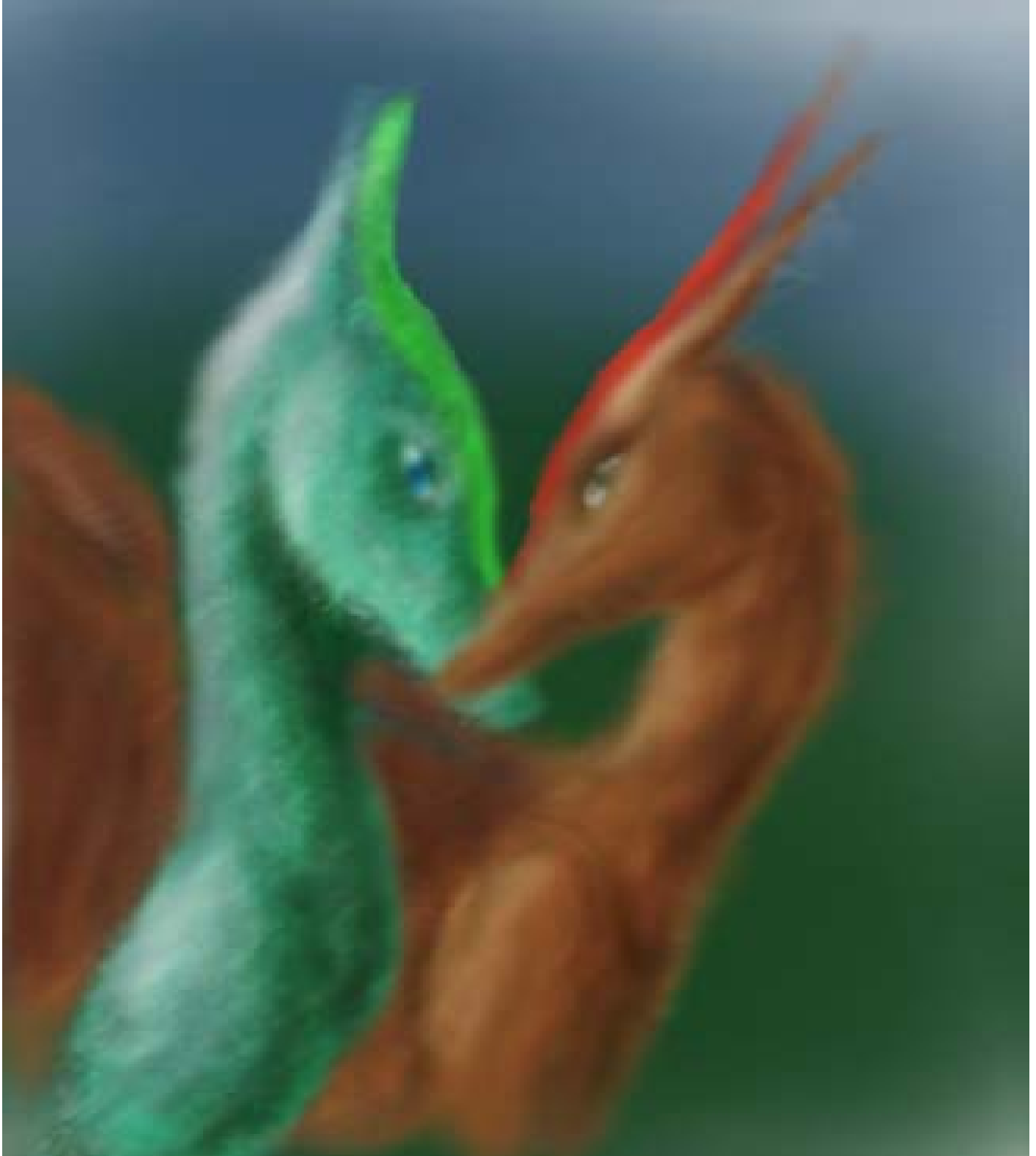


WiccaUK

NETWORKING FOR WICCANS IN THE UK

WiccaUK Members Magazine

Issue Three June 2003





E-Zine June 2003

Hey all,

Welcome to the June issue of the WiccaUK Ezine.

Sorry for the slight lateness of this months issue. I've been very busy with exams but never the less here is the June Issue of the Magazine.

In this issue we can find numerous articles this month. Raven-Spirit talks about the dark sides of our soul whilst we also have other articles by Ferdia and Valesk.

There are also some creative writing pieces this month too, The Whale by Triona Eather and Essence of an Evenings Walk by Nightingale.

On top of that the usual herb section can be found too, this month WhiteWolf and KitchenWitch tell us

about peppermint and its various uses and properties.

So please enjoy the June issue of the Magazine and as always contribute!

Best Wishes,

Sparks

Editor

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Cover picture by Erynn



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London Discussion Group

This month we're launching our Discussion Group for Londoners. It'll be aimed at beginners to the craft/ occult scene, covering subjects such as Gods and Goddesses, Basic Tenants of Wicca, Divination, Tarot,

Meditation, Astrology etc. It's being run as a WiccaUK group, but is open to all, whether or not they're members of the site.

The venue will be sorted out at our next London moot (June 8th), it's hoped to be in the meeting room of a new esoteric shop just opened in Covent Garden, Treadwells, though this is to be confirmed.

There will be a door charge to cover room hire, and hopefully refreshments (depending on the cost of the room).

Keep an eye on the London forum for up to date details, or email casp@wiccauk.com to be added to the mailing list for info when it's available.



Witches Ball 2003

This year will see the first of our (hopefully!) annual Witches Ball's. This will be a fundraising evening for WiccaUK, with all profits being reinvested in the site, to help get our membership packs printed and to start fully organizing our conference next spring!

It's taking place on Saturday, August 2nd in a Central London venue—just a stones throw away from the Freemasons Hall in Covent Garden. Time is TBA, but probably 6.30 for 7. The full ticket price includes a three course meal and wine. Later in the evening, we'll be

clearing the room, and opening it up to allow a bit more room for socializing! We've got a cheaper ticket option too which excludes the meal should you just want to come along to meet members.

We're holding a raffle in the evening, for which we have a number of great prizes! Some worth many times the value of the tickets, something you definitely don't want to miss

out on!

Tickets cost £25 for the full evening (meal and wine) or £15 for the evening entertainment part only. Full Members get a £5 discount.

All profits go towards WiccaUK, development of the website and costs for our offline networking endeavors.

Booking form and menu selection are on the site.

Want to run an event?!

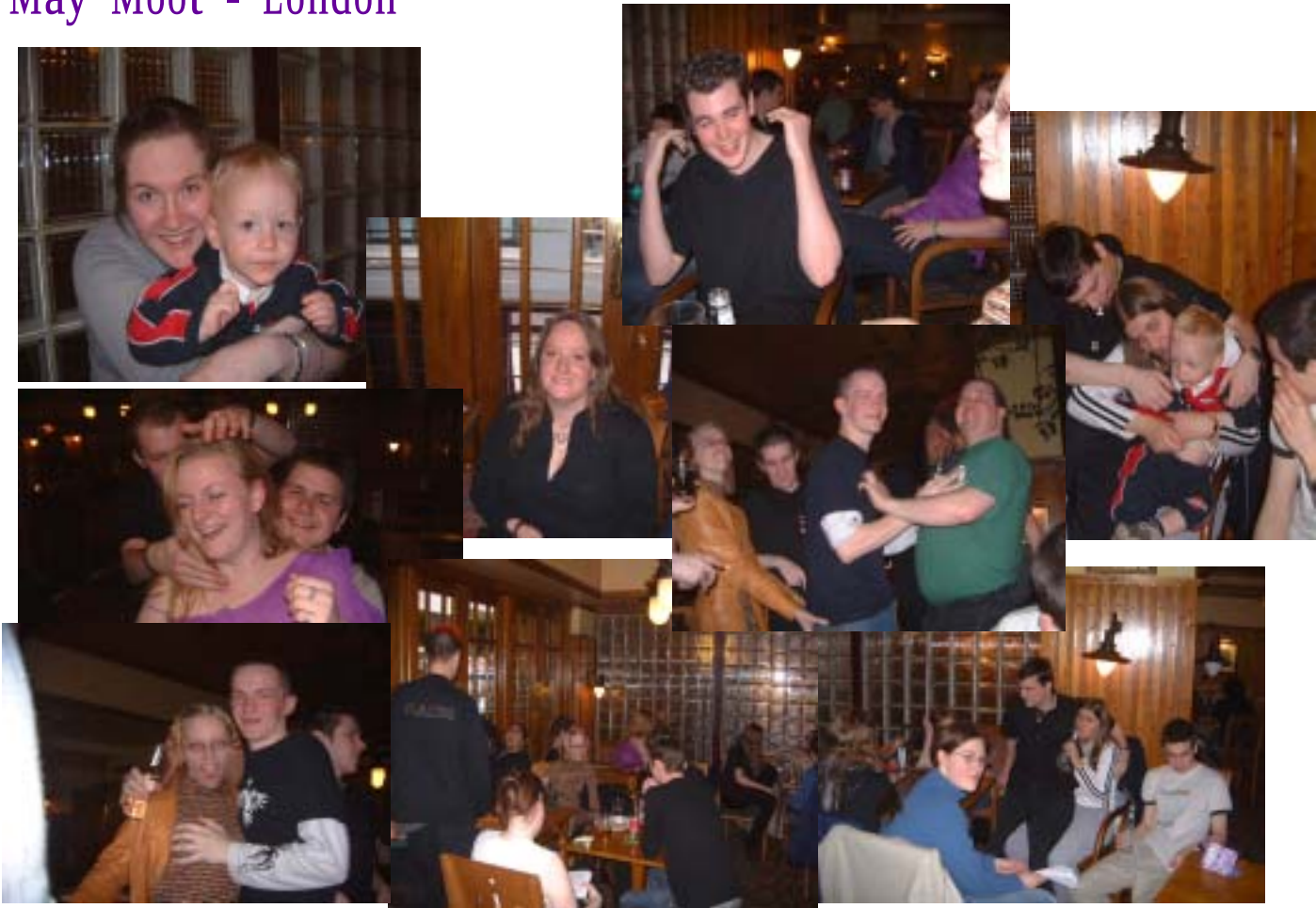
If you're thinking about running a local Moot or other event, let us know! Email events@wiccauk.com with what you've decided so far, and we'll try to help as much as possible with the rest. We'll mention it on the site and, if we have enough notice, mention it in newsletters, both our own and other peoples, and in this magazine.

Beltane Bash 2003 - London





May Moot - London



May Moot - Edinburgh





Fate - A Wiccan Perspective –By Ferdia

Fate. What is it? A while ago on the WiccaUK website the question of whether or not we believe in fate was posted and I replied. When I'd done this it got me thinking about how much this one idea affected my beliefs as a Wiccan. In this age of Fluffy-Bunnies, Gardernians, Dianists and a whole bunch of other traditions, the number of which is growing everyday, to call oneself a Wiccan can be in the eyes of some a rather ambiguous statement. It may not carry much weight in the pagan community where a lot of the other practices have much more structured belief systems such as the Druids, Shamans etc. So when I say I'm a Wiccan what does that mean and how does that tie in with what I started talking about, the concept of fate? Well, for me, being a Wiccan means worshipping nature and worshipping life. It means belief in a divine spirit which I personify in two halves, the Goddess and the God. It means believing in reincarnation and not in hell or sin. It means believing that through training and practise I can harness the innate abilities that were given to me as a gift from the Goddess and God and use these abilities to help others and to help myself live a long and happy life. It also means believing in Divine Justice of a sort in the form of Karma, believing that my actions will affect me just as much as others and that if I'm a negative person I'll draw negativity to me, but that I can also draw positivity to me. So now you know what I believe how does this tie in with my idea of Fate

Well as I said I believe in reincarnation. Now I don't believe if I'm a bad person that in my next life I'll come back as a bug. I believe that I'll come back as a human. If I'm a bad person my actions will come back to bite me in this life not my next. But since I believe in reincarnation I also believe that in each life we all have lessons to learn. As we learn more about ourselves, life and the universe around us we become more enlightened and through our many lifetimes we can learn all the secrets of the universe.

I believe that in each incarnation the lessons to be learned in a given life are decided by the Goddess and the God. Perhaps they are decided just before we reincarnate or perhaps they are decided during our life spans, I don't know. But I do think that there are things to be learned in each life and as we travel through each life and have different ex-

periences, we should be trying to figure out what these experiences tell us. It is from this idea of lessons to be learned that I have developed my idea of what fate is. I believe that certain things are made happen by however that all powerful being is up there. This is done to make sure we have the opportunity to learn the lessons we need to learn. So in this way there is a fate allotted to each of us and our lives, a fate governed by the lessons we've been put onto this earth to learn, or that we are learning while on this earth (depending on your perspective).

I don't think that the things that happen are due to some sadistic game nor do I think us all puppets forced into performing actions without a say in them. Instead I think that there are circumstances made possible in our lives by a divine understanding of the human mind which causes certain things to just happen because we make them happen. After all we often find ourselves in similar situations repeatedly and ask ourselves how we got here again. I think what's happening here is that due to our making the same choices over and over we cause the same scenarios to occur over and over because we haven't learned what needed to be learnt the first, second, third, fourth ... time. And when we eventually ask ourselves "how did I let this happen again", this is the moment when we have an opportunity to learn what needs to be learned and so move on to the next lesson and so continue on the path laid out before us.

But does this mean things happen because we have free will and therefore make them happen, or is it part of some divine plan? In my opinion it's both and neither. As I said we are not puppets on a string, we are just people trying to get through life. However a plan is made for us in each life, yet it's our own free will that decides how we act within the parameters of this plan and it is from this uncertainty, which arises from free will, that we can learn what we have to, because to the Goddess and God it wasn't uncertain what we would do. They know us better than we do and they know what we are like. Therefore they know what kind of decisions we are most likely to make and what conditions are needed to ensure we learn what needs to be learned. After all, when you think back on your life and the really important things that have happened to affect you,

you can pretty much always say that it all started at some particular point. This point in my opinion is the initial scenario laid out by the Goddess and God to ensure you were put in the right place at the right time to learn what had to be learned and because they know us so well they can let freewill take care of the rest. But when people do bad things, it is not because "God has a plan", it's because they ignored the plan. Their free will allowed them to become fixated on something else, be it money or power, it doesn't matter. What matters is that they got distracted and lost sight of what's important and in doing so where not able to learn the lessons they need to learn.

So when I think of fate and what it means to me I think of it as a "teacher's plan". I believe that it is this "teacher's plan" which decides some of the initial situations I find myself in throughout my life. I also believe that it is my free will which gives me the scope to be able to act in each situation laid out before me and learn from each experience what I need to learn.

So as I walk through this incarnation I sometimes sit back and ask myself, "well have you learnt anything yet?". And sometimes the answer is yes and sometimes the answer is no, but most of the time I'm not sure. But I keep on going because I do know one thing, and that is that the Goddess and God have set things out in such a way that eventually I will learn what has to be learned. And if sometimes I need a little help, perhaps they'll help. I don't know. But when I die and go to the Summerland to rest before my next incarnation I'll have the opportunity to look back on my life and the lessons I learned from it, and I'll look back on all my other lives as well and see how what I learned in my latest incarnation ties in with the big picture. And maybe someday it will be my fate to be able to finally say "Yes, I am a Know-It-ALL".

Blessed Be,
Ferdia



The Dark Night of the Soul –Part I - By RavenSpirit

How fear of the unknown keeps us imprisoned within ourselves, and how the Healing of the Dark Moon can set us free.

"I'm going through a dark episode."
"Dark forces are gathering." "There is no end to my darkness." "The Prince of Darkness." "I'm in a deep, dark pit."
"Darkness is upon us." "I'm in a dark mood." "To keep a dark secret."
"Crossing over to the dark side." "To take a leap in the dark."

We seem to be suffering from collective nyctophobia – a morbid fear of night or darkness. Since the onset of the suppression of the Goddess by patriarchal religions at the end of the Neolithic period, the Dark has gradually become synonymous for Evil, and death has become the absolute end, overcome only by the miraculous Life Eternal granted only to those who have lived their lives in fear of eternal Hell and Damnation. Or so we are told to believe.

For many, a life by the Book is enough; many accept the teachings and restrictions put on to them by Men of the Faith. But for some it quells not the thirst for answers: where is the Goddess? Why can I not relate to this God directly? If 'Love Thy Neighbour' is such an important commandment, then what is wrong with being gay? And why should we not suffer a witch to live? Questions that are never answered and always met with stern reprimands and threats of damnation.

So these few start to look beyond the strictly enforced boundaries of the known and venture into the unknown. And soon enough they leave behind the harness of organised religion and open themselves up wholly and willingly to the force they have known to exist for many years: the Goddess. She is at our beginning and our end and will guide us on to the next plane; she charges us to meet, recognise, remember and love anew; she heals our deepest wounds; she teaches us to search ourselves and become whole.

Inevitably, in this process of becoming whole, there come periods of deepest, darkest depression for every one of us. In order to become whole we must embrace those parts of ourselves we have been suppressing all our lives. The dark secrets we carry with us, the things we don't like about ourselves, the dark de-

sires we cannot ever fulfil, the dark memories and feelings of anger, hatred and despair we have bottled up for so long; these are the things we must face and come to terms with now.

We must turn inward and analyse with an open mind that which we find inside. It often means sacrificing old and familiar ways and taking a leap into the dark, a terrifying prospect. Instinctively we turn away from the unknown and hold on to what we know, even if deep inside we are aware of the destructive nature of that which we know. We know we wear a mask that suits the requirements of our social environment. We know we tend to over-identify with this artificial identity to the point that we start believing it is who we are, where we forget the person beneath the mask. We know the conscious act of putting on the mask creates an ever increasing rift between our shadow side and the side that we put on display. And the longer we let it go on, the harder it becomes to unite our drifting sides again. And yet we wear the mask, put it on day after day until we forget it's there and never even take it off anymore.

It is this division that causes much grief on every level of existence, and it is an relatively modern affliction. Long before the introduction of the fiery patriarchal deities who ruled from above, when the Goddess was still part of every aspect of life – birth, growth, death and rebirth – we didn't think in terms of opposites being mutually exclusive. We experienced existence inclusively and understood how everything was connected. We only had to look around us to see our understanding confirmed: seeds grew into plants, plants bore fruit, plants died and after the dark of winter their seeds grew into plants again.

The same pattern occurred every night in the skies overhead: each night the moon showed a different face; the small sliver of light grew fatter and fatter until she reached a perfectly globular shape, after which the luminary of the night sky declined again until she disappeared. Three nights the night would be dark but for the shimmering of the stars, but on the fourth night she rose again, and the cycle would start all over again.

We associated the ever changing Moon with the feminine qualities of intuition and the subconscious that was the seat of creativity and receptiveness, and she became our Moon Goddess. The fierce Sun who ruled the skies during the day personified the Sun God in his masculine aspects of logical analysis of the objective world, of contemplation and action. Essentially opposite in their natures, Sun and Moon were seen to be complementary rather than mutually exclusive – they were both required in order for life to exist.

Their movements through the skies, moving away from each other, then chasing one another to be

united again, were seen as a mystical dance, portraying the cyclical nature and the duality that was immanent in all of existence.

The masculine Sun and the analytical qualities it personified guided mankind towards Enlightenment and embodied intellectual prowess. In the dark of night, the feminine Moon guarded the mysteries of magick, sexuality and spirituality, guiding the steps of genuine seekers, and obscuring the paths of the uninitiated.

In those days we understood that nothing is final, that existence moves in perpetual cycles of birth, growth and death, giving life to birth again. In those days we knew death was but the beginning, and we had not the unreasonable fear of ageing and dying that is so common nowadays. We understood that death was nothing but the release of old patterns in order to grow into something new, and the Underworld was an integral part of our understanding of the transition. It wasn't a place of everlasting suffering, but a maturation chamber; the womb of the Goddess who would give birth to us in the next stage of our cycle.

The introduction of patriarchal religions changed all that. At the onset of the Bronze and Iron ages, coinciding with the invention of the wheel and thereby much improved modes of travel, nomadic tribes from Northern Europe and the Indo-European planes invaded much of the Euro-Asian continent, settling in Western Europe and the Middle East. These peoples didn't just bring their phenomenal skills in metalworking and pottery, but also their religions.

Theirs were war minded masculine Gods, creatures of light who ruled from above, supreme and beyond human reach and comprehension. They were conquerors, just like the peoples that worshipped them.

The invaders conquered land, people and religion alike, and the native Goddess cultures were wiped from the face of the planet. Temples and libraries were destroyed, and those who carried on worshipping the Goddess had no choice but to go underground. And that's where the Goddess and her earthly representatives – women – remained: suppressed, hidden in their dark subterranean shelters from which they ruled the forces of evil – or so it came to be believed.

With the introduction of the masculine Gods of light into societies where the Goddess was conceptualised by the Moon, the mind-set was created for the mutually exclusive



dualism that still plagues us today: light vs dark; good vs evil; masculine vs feminine; thought vs intuition; analytic vs holistic. There no longer was any room for the complementary aspect of opposites; in a society where the male thought process dominates, existence must be analysed and explained and can per definition not be seen as a living, co-dependent system.

The natural order of things was thrown off balance. No longer was our Goddess seen as a loving mother, one who gives life and sustains it, the one who welcomes us back and guides us onto the plane. Instead, she became the evil soul reaper, the ruthless seductress and wielder of vile sorceries. She, and with her all women, came to be regarded as unclean, lustful creatures of evil, who had no other place in society than to produce legitimate offspring. Co-dependence went out of the window and was replaced with extremely uneasy co-existence.

Now that the Goddess was taken out of the equation of life and death, and testosterone driven thought dominated existence, society lost sight of the eternal spiral dance that is life, and a belief that all things must end took its place. In Western Europe the Romans had begun their expansionism, and gradually they had succeeded in pushing back the 'Barbarians', descendants of the original Northern and Indo-European invaders who had crushed the Goddess underfoot. In Palestine, the Hebrews, the very same people who had eradicated Goddess worship in that area, were now at the receiving end of ruthless suppression themselves, and in that socio-political environment of suffering and despair the scene was set for the ultimate triumph over nature-driven religions: the rise of Christ Jesus, King of the Jews, Redeemer of All.

The birth of the Nazarene, carefully made to coincide with the pagan festival of Yule, celebrating the rebirth of the Sun God, heralded a new era of hope. This Son of God would free his chosen people, Israel, and anyone who believed in him and lived the Will of God, his Father, would enter the Kingdom of Heaven through him, and receive everlasting life. The carefully orchestrated Christian Revolution caused massive upheaval and although the Roman Empire was beginning to crumble, ironically the scales of religious control tipped in favour of Rome, and to date the Western World still lives largely under Roman control.

The rise of Christianity had an enormous impact on society. A sense of guilt was being instilled in people from the moment they were born, for they were guilty of a sin (curiosity) committed by ancient ancestors and their Lord Jesus Christ had died for them

to wash that sin away. Degrees of sin were conceived, murder being a mortal one. Yet people were tortured and murdered in the name of a God whose sixth Commandment is "Thou shalt not kill". Those of us who remained true to our Lady suffered ruthless prosecution in the name of this God whose second Commandment is "Love thy neighbour like thyself".

Part II to follow in next months issue.

Essence of an Evenings Walk - Nightingale

The last gold sunrays of the day
Stretching like fingers through the trees,
Across the sapphire of the sky
Through quivering, pale green summer leaves.
Dark green ivy on age old bark,
Grass and ferns and last years mould,
The gurgling chatter of a journeying stream,
Wondering what future travels hold.
A wood pigeon coos sleepily from above,
A startled pheasant dashes, a crow loudly caws,
Chiff-Chaff, Song thrush, Blackbird, Finch,
A crowded melody together all four.
A mirage of colours blur in profusion
As flowers, like jewels, in the hedgerows bloom,
A cow moos softly as it chews the cud,
A child shouts out "gotta go home soon!"
The whirr as someone mows the lawn
And the summer smell of fresh cut grass.
The sound of a hammer, some late DIY,
The light slowly fading, the evening's almost passed.
The old stone bridge over that chattering stream
Where the woodlice scuttle off, through moss, to hide,
A cloud passes over, a cool breeze blows
Which rustles the grass by the river side.

Pagan by numbers- By Marty Drury.

I select the option to download the file. It's at times like this when I add Broadband access to my Christmas list. Even Witchcraft is at a loss when faced with the sloth of a dial-up connection. The file is entitled Pagan Desktop Theme. I install the theme. My icons morph into cauldrons and "Blessed Be" is scrawled across **My Network Places**. A silver moon is covering the **Recycle Bin**. A sound file is attached to the theme. From now on, every time I load a document I am greeted with "Why don't you come with me little girl, on a magic carpet ride."

As contrived as the design is, the theme saves itself with a stark message sung when I start **Windows**. "What makes you think she is a Witch?" The theme has a point. If one wanted to find a Witch today where would one go? Time was, if you wanted to find a Witch, you would travel to the end of your village and seek the old woman at the bottom of the lane. The days of the wise woman are not long gone. She just works out of town these days. They can be young or old. They can be of either gender. They could be anyone.

When I was little I was given The Usbourne Book of Witches. It taught me

that witches wear black or grey cloaks, pointy hats and always hang out with cats with only one eye. Yet, as well as giving me a skewed picture of what it was really like to be a Witch, the book [like the theme] taught me something of importance. That Witches are a positive force in this world. In the book they fought demons and wizards with superiority complexes. In life they fight for freedom of expression, for love and for harmony.

One does not become a Witch "by numbers." You can't download a theme from the Internet and suddenly become a Witch. You don't become a Witch the moment you lay your hands on the latest teen spell box at Waterstones. But that doesn't mean that those who use the Internet to research Wicca or those who enjoy the latest episode of "Teen Wicca" aren't serious about the Craft. The point is you have to have more than the book or access to the Internet. The missing ingredient is you. If you want to be a Witch then every piece of information will help you and nothing will stop you.

MORE:

The strength of the Craft is in its continuing diversity. We are not an old faith that died out under pressure from monotheists. We are individuals seeking separate paths

with a common interest. We can be isolated and surrounded in the same instant. One only has to scan the photos from the Moots to see that. In years to come, when a news story breaks on the television networks, the opinions of the Archbishop and the Cardinal will be matched by the ponderings of the polytheists. In our families, we all pursue our own lives in the knowledge that we have the support of those who love us and know about the world we are entering into. It's no different in faiths such as Wicca. So, next Halloween, turn up on the doorstep in your normal clothes and when they ask why you're not wearing a costume or have face paint running down your cheeks answer them with this: "Because I'm a Witch. I came dressed as myself."

Ends

Marty Drury [WiccaUk.com name Valesk] is a freelance journalist with a specialised interest in Paganism and spiritual beliefs. He has written for a number of publications and maintains his own websites.

The Whale - By Triona Eather

The powerful body of the whale leapt out of the water, for a moment it hung in the light blue sky, the sun reflecting of the water drops across the enormous body, then without warning, it fell back into the water with an almighty crash.

The whale was enjoying himself, food was plentiful, the water was crystal clear, and it was a perfect day for being alive.

The monstrous ship silently drove through the water, the men on board looking for fresh bounty.

A loud cry went up among the men as the radar gave an almost inaudible beep, you could feel the excitement and energy as several of the crew rushed to the side to try and sight the prize.

Oblivious to the ship the whale played on, swimming and leaping, enjoying the coolness of the water, the heat of the sun, singing at the sheer joy of being alive.

The ship readied itself for action, the decks cleared, the harpoons prepared.

The seagulls shrieked to the whale, as the harpooner poised in a Herculean stance before letting loose with the harpoon. The harpoon arched across the sky, the sun glinting of its shiny surface as it hit on target, thudding into the whale's side.

The whales screams of anguish was frightening, the joy of the men startling, as the men hauled the dying body of the whale to the side of their ship, the blood running freely into the sea, discolouring it, forever marking the sea as a place of death.

The cruelty showing openly on their faces as they stared at the beautiful creation of nature, seeing only dollar signs instead.

And now the blood has ran dry, yet the memory still lingers, for where once beauty roamed, now only the stench of death remains.

A Beginners Guide to the Craft Herblore

**By KitchenWitch and
WhiteWolf, May 2003**

For as long as anyone can remember people have been using not just Herbs, but other Plants and Trees to help with their magical and healing work. The information below is for reference purposes only and should be used only by those who have required or inherited knowledge.

Caution some plants can be fatal if misused.



Peppermint

Mentha piperita, also as English mint

Planet: Venus
Element: Air

During its several thousand years of consistent use by diverse populations mint leaf preparations have been used in both eastern and western cultures. Herbalists in ancient Greece and Rome used peppermint for nearly every ailment. The Greeks believed mints could clear the voice and cure hiccups.

Magical Uses

Main magical uses: cleansing, consecration, dreams, happiness, healing, love, money, passion, prosperity, protection, psychic

development, purification, release, renewal, rest, sleep.

Other magical uses: Divination, energy, exorcism, good luck, grieving, spirit offering, success, and transformation.

To help clear out all negative and sickness energies, burn peppermint in a new home. Carry with other herbs to boost love and abundance. If placed on a person or their picture, peppermint will help with healing. Peppermint gives the added push needed if used when changes are needed in one's life. Also use in a tea to help ease tensions. Peppermint tea aids in divination.

Lore: Mints are sacred to the god Hades, because young Minthe was transformed into a mint to keep her from Hades' embrace by his wife. Peppermint is also sometimes attributed to Zeus.

Growing

Mint of any variety is best grown from small plants or cuttings rather than seed. Plant your mint in its own pot as it with all mints it is VERY invasive. If you do want to grow peppermint in the soil, plant it within a bucket that has had its bottom cut off, and the bucket buried at least 12 inches into the earth with the lip protruding above the surface. Mint is very easy to grow, it can also be grown in a small pot on the windowsill but it needs to be kept well watered or the leaves will become tough and unpleasant.



Culinary uses

Warning

Peppermint tea is generally safe, but pregnant women or nursing mothers should drink only small amounts of peppermint tea. Those with a history of miscarriage should not use peppermint while pregnant. Also, peppermint in any form should not be given to babies or toddlers, as excessive amounts of the oils can irritate the youngsters' stomach lining and may lead to ulceration.

These recipe ideas will work with pretty much any variety of mint.

Try adding some ripped leaves of fresh mint to a green salad for a refreshing change. Mix chopped mint with cous cous and serve with lamb. Add a few sprigs of mint to your new potatoes when cooking. Add some finely shredded mint to fresh garden peas, with some butter, and season with salt and pepper.

Peppermint Tea:

Ingredients

1 ounce fresh peppermint leaves

1 pint boiling water

Honey to taste



Place the peppermint leaves in a cup.

Pour in boiling water.

Cover the cup with a saucer and let it stand for 10 minutes.

Scoop out the leaves with a spoon and add a little honey if you'd like. Enjoy!

Peppermint Creams

1 packet of Ready Mixed Royal Icing

Peppermint Oil or Peppermint Essence

Green Food Colouring if desired

Icing Sugar

To decorate – Dark Chocolate

Knead the royal icing on a board until soft and pliable.

Add a few drops of peppermint oil or peppermint extract to the softened icing and knead well. Also add a few drops of green food colouring if you wish, and knead until the colour is evenly distributed.

Dust a board with icing sugar and roll out the icing until about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a centimetre thick, cut into rounds approx 2 to 3 centimetres across, and leave in the air to harden on the outside.

To decorate – melt the chocolate in a bowl over barely simmering water, and half dip each peppermint round in the chocolate, leaving one half uncoated - as if you were dunking biscuits into tea! Put aside on greaseproof paper to set.

Contribute!

This is the members magazine, and we need members contributions every month to keep it going! Stories, articles, book and movie reviews, just a rant on your views of the craft, some of your favourite spells or rituals... send it all in!

To submit your work, email it to sparks@wiccauk.com. If you have any pictures you'd like scanned in, send them to:

Members Magazine, BM WiccaUK, London, WC1N 3XX

And please enclose an SAE if you'd like anything returned!